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ABSTRACT

Independent study is an instructional approach that can have enormous power in the classroom. It can be used successfully with students at all ability levels, even though it is often associated with gifted students. Independent study is an opportunity for students to study a subject of their own choosing under the guidance of a teacher. The affective power of the approach lies in the fact that each participant has a strong sense of ownership and responsibility for what is learned. A key reward of the approach for the student is the possibility of becoming an expert on a chosen topic. Another plus for independent study is that students are using higher thinking skills when involved in the project. This booklet provides a 10-step procedure for teachers setting up independent study in the classroom: (1) introducing the notion of independent study to the student; (2) designing curricula (the largest section, with specific suggestions for 15 different subjects); (3) readiness activities before independent study orientation; (4) assembling resources; (5) management; (6) suggestions for culminating activities; (7) modes of teacher evaluation; (8) student orientation; (9) student evaluation; and (10) suggested parent involvement. Also included is a list of possible solutions to students' common problems with independent study. (JMK)

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CENTERING ON

INDEPENDENT STUDY

STEPHANIE MILLER

Developed by the
New York City Teacher Centers Consortium

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United Federation of Teachers

Youth Employment Project

NEW YORK CITY TEACHER CENTERS CONSORTIUM

BRIEF PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Teacher Center is:

- a collaborative staff development effort of the United Federation of Teachers, the NYC Board of Education, participating community school districts and the New York State Education Department.
- a network of knowledgeable practitioners who are in a position to plan appropriate interventions, support implementation of a variety of teaching and learning activities and disseminate usable research findings to schools and classrooms.
- a place where teachers can learn from each other in a non-judgmental environment, relying on peer support and exchange.

It offers on-site support services which:

- provide assistance to individuals and groups of teachers who want to examine, develop or try out instructional strategies, classroom management procedures or curriculum approaches.
- promote colleagiality through creating a setting for sharing exemplary teaching practices within and among classrooms and encouraging the examination of recurring problems of teaching and learning.
- apply a variety of staff development methods appropriate for adults including consultation, demonstration, modeling, teaming and coaching.

Its outreach programs encompass:

- after school courses and workshops based on the professional needs and interests of teachers, led by skilled professionals who are sensitive to the complexity of the school setting.
- an instructional information center which contains a collection of materials and resources and provides a computerized retrieval service affording access to human, organization and agency resources.
- targeted city-wide institutes tailored to the needs and interests of special groups.
- conferences on subjects of broad and practical educational significance.

A Note To Teachers And Students

The United Federation of Teachers Youth Employment Project and the New York City Teacher Centers Consortium are pleased to have collaborated in the production of this publication, **Independent Study.**

The material was developed by Stephanie Miller expressly for production by the Youth Employment Project. The practices and procedures described in this booklet are drawn from the author's experience both as a teacher and a Teacher Center Specialist. They have been successfully used in a variety of school settings to help students to become more responsible from their own learning.

The Youth Employment Program is a joint effort of the United Federation of Teachers, as project sponsor, and the New York City Department of Employment, the New York City Board of Education, Division of High Schools and the New York City Teacher Centers Consortium.

It is involved in the development of teacher-created educational materials, their production by young workers and their dissemination to classrooms throughout New York City to enhance and enrich teaching and learning.

Special thanks are due to print crew supervisor Stan Damast his youth workers, and project coordinator Howard Rotterdam for making their product possible.

We invite your comments and encourage you to submit your own original books, learning games and other educational materials to us for possible future production.

Maurice Leiter
Director, Program Development
United Federation of Teachers

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Director, New York City
Teacher Centers Consortium

Independent Study is an instructional approach that can have enormous power in a classroom. Independent Study can be used successfully with students at all ability levels, even though it is often associated with gifted students. Independent Study is an opportunity for students to study a subject of their own choosing under the guidance of a teacher in school.

The affective power of the Independent Study approach lies in the fact that each participant has a strong sense of ownership and responsibility for what is learned. Independent Study is often the only area of a child's school experience over which the individual has any control. Since the student chooses the topic and makes important choices regarding how learning will occur, motivation and sense of accomplishment will be greater. When students use an Independent Study approach within a small group, they have an opportunity to learn from each other. Interaction helps develop better skills and greater awareness as well as potentially break down social barriers which may exist in the classroom.

A key reward of Independent Study for a child is the very real possibility of becoming an expert about the chosen topic. This makes a child powerful. I have seen students change in important ways as a result of Independent Study. Many who were previously unmotivated, developed interests in certain areas of the curriculum. Many had experienced the respect of both adults and peers for the first time. Children were given status because of the knowledge they possessed.

The higher thinking skills are constantly at work while students do Independent Study projects. Students learn to formulate questions, apply and synthesize facts, evaluate information, make judgments about crucial issues surrounding the topic, use a wide variety of information sources, translate text materials into other communication forms, utilize research techniques and think critically. Sophisticated though they may be, there is not a single task in the list just mentioned that a child in the second grade cannot do at the appropriate level.

Independent Study should not be considered an academic frill. It is a good, sound educational practice and should be given the same importance as any other worthwhile teaching procedure. The teacher must be available to students engaged in Independent Study at specific times to assist and facilitate the work of the students.

There are as many approaches to Independent Study as there are teachers and students. This book will suggest ways of introducing Independent Study to students and provide prototypes for developing your own Independent Study curricula, lists of resources, culminating activities, sample curricula, management methods and several forms for evaluation and recordkeeping.

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS INDEPENDENT STUDY?

Independent study is the opportunity for a student to pursue a subject of his/her own choosing under the guidance of a teacher in a classroom setting.

HOW IS THE INDEPENDENT STUDY RELATED TO THE CURRICULUM?

The concepts stressed in different subjects can be readily connected to the content of many Independent Study topics. Students can go beyond the surface information of curriculum areas by applying research skills. Students become independent learners. Reading and writing skills gain enormous practicality in the minds of students engaged in the Independent Study.

WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TEACHER?

Teachers should provide:

- a curriculum structure which guides the students to a greater knowledge of the topic of study;
- adequate resource materials and the necessary hardware-scissors, paper, paste, etc.;
- a framework within which a student can evaluate individual performance and determine the modes of working and learning which work best;
- demonstrations, examples, and explanations for the students to understand clearly the activities. (If a mobile is to be made, students should see a mobile and discuss symbols which might be used in the mobile).

TEACHERS SHOULD ACQUAINT STUDENTS WITH:

- outside resources - movies, exhibits, library programs, restorations, etc.;
- basic research skills - use of index and table of contents, formulation of questions, summarizing and paraphrasing; and
- the 'perils of plagiarism'.

HOW DOES THE STUDENT BENEFIT BY DOING AN INDEPENDENT STUDY?

The student:

- is put in touch with his learning powers;
- has some control over school experiences;
- who is truant or reluctant, has a reason to want to come to school;
- acquires and develops learning/research skills which are required in junior and senior high schools;
- develops the ability to think critically and to organize data using diagrams, dioramas, poetry, short stories, graphs, posters, games, commemorative stamps, etc;
- develops a sensitivity to the author's point of view;
- learns to use a variety of learning modes; and
- learns to make efficient and purposeful use of time.

WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT?

A student should:

- select a topic of genuine interest;
- state the research in his/her own words;
- use time and resources properly; and
- plan a course of action and follow through to completion.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Stephanie Miller has taught grades two through eight in New York City public schools since 1970. After writing a program for gifted and talented students at the intermediate school level, Mrs. Miller coordinated the I.S. 158, District 12 Gifted and Talented program for five years.

Over a period of twelve years, Mrs. Miller has used Independent Study with average and gifted students in contained classes, cluster programs, and department settings.

Mrs. Miller is presently a Teacher Specialist with the New York City Teacher Centers Consortium.

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PROCEDURES TO SET UP INDEPENDENT STUDY IN THE CLASSROOM

STEP I. INTRODUCING THE NOTION OF INDEPENDENT STUDY TO THE STUDENT

ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS

Listed below is a series of procedures which have worked for me during the last twelve years. Teachers are different; these procedures should be adapted to individual teaching styles and students. There ought to be one caution. Make sure that your changes don't violate the essential ingredients of the Independent Study:

- The student must be voluntarily committed to doing the study.
- There must be curriculum for a student to follow.
- Resources must be provided.
- Specific class time and work spaces must be provided.

I told students that they could study any topic of their choice for a specific period of time each week. The only requirement for acceptance of the topic was the availability of the resources necessary to the study. As long as either the teacher or the student could supply appropriate information, the topic would be acceptable for Independent Study.

OPENING STATEMENT

Here are some suggested openers for introducing Independent Study which have worked with students.

"I'm going to give you a chance to be your own teacher. . ."

"For the next few weeks, you will have a chance to learn about something that often isn't taught in school."

"When you come to school, you learn what somebody else thinks you should know. Now you'll have a chance to learn what you want to know."

"If you could learn about anything at all in school, what would you want to learn about?"

The teacher might say any of the above to a single student, a group, or an entire class. It depends on how many children will participate. If the statement is made to the whole class, there should be an understanding that students would be given specific dates when the Independent Study could begin.

CHOOSING TOPICS

Students should list two or three such topics on a sheet of paper. The teacher would then have an idea of the major interests of the students and could develop curricula for those areas of interest.

It's important that students not discuss choices with their classmates in the early stages. You don't want students picking topics because their friends have the interest. If students generate their own responses, you will get a more honest picture of the students' interests.

SUGGESTED TOPICS TO DISCUSS

Some students will have trouble deciding on a topic. For this reason the teacher should have some suggestions ready. Pick topics with which you feel comfortable and create curricula for those first. It's very likely that most students will choose topics from those which you suggest, although you should express willingness to accept other topics. Give some students a day or two to decide, if needed.

Listed below are suggested topics that you can present to the class as possible choices:

- Architecture
- Aviation
- Baseball
- Botany
- Cinema
- The Circus
- Clothing and Fashion
- The Future
- Human Body
- Law
- Lost Civilizations
- Mythology and Legends
- Solar System
- Theatre
- Women Who Changed the World

STEP II. DESIGNING CURRICULA

You don't have to be an expert in the subject to develop a curriculum. The students will learn more than you anticipated and they will become the experts.

To develop the curricula, the teacher will need to:

- Find one or two good general books on the topic (How and Why books or The First Book of . . . are good choices).
- Brainstorm the major issues surrounding the topic, the topic's impact on our world, and basic information about the topic which was found in the resource books.
- Use the prototypes included in this book for constructing the activities which will form the curriculum.

> *The prototypes are largely activities, not questions. The teacher "plugs" the knowledge the student should acquire into a prototype. If the student is doing a project on the Human Body, the activity in the curriculum might read: "Write a book for younger children about the circulatory system". This item directs the student to learn about the circulatory system thoroughly but the teacher doesn't have to list specific questions.*

- Make the first item in the curriculum read: "List 5 questions you'd like to be able to answer by the time you complete your study." This gives students a chance to direct some of the study.
- Decide which items you want to require students to do and which ones the students can elect to do. The final assignment might consist of five required items and an additional six to eight items which the student chooses. This elective process is another form of control for the student to exert.
- Select between 15 to 20 activities. Listed below are 50 suggested prototypes.

1. Make a card or board game to help your classmates remember important information about your topic.
2. List 5 questions that you'd like to be able to answer about your topic by the time you have completed your study.

3. Make a diagram to show . . . .
4. Make a stamp to honor . . . .
5. Make a mobile which symbolizes . . . .
6. Take a poll to find out . . . .
7. Make a graph to show . . . .
8. Write an interview with . . . .
9. Create a diary about . . . .
10. Write a letter to . . . .
11. Write a scene about . . . .
12. On a chart compare . . . and . . . .
13. Make a series of biographical posters about . . . .
14. Make a diagram or plan for a . . . of the future. What needs will people of the future have to meet? How will your . . . help?
15. Find out why the culture of the . . . declined. Make a series of posters to show what happened.
16. Write a short book for younger children which will introduce them to . . . . Use simple language and be sure to illustrate it.
17. Using a picture timeline form, show what happened a) during a typical day in the life of . . . . b) during the development of . . . .
18. Make a chart to show what the . . . culture has contributed to our modern knowledge.
19. Make a chart to show how the . . . has influenced our lives.
20. Show how the environment of . . . influenced (es) their diet, religion, architecture, customs, or government.
21. Compare the government of . . . with ours.
22. Make a relief map of . . . .
23. Make a series of drawings to show the a) life cycle of . . . . b) development of . . . .
24. Make a model of . . . .
25. Choose an important . . . that occurred during . . . . Report it as a newspaper reporter would.
26. Write a political commerical for a government head or his opponet. Tape it.
27. Write an editorial in which you state your opinion about the importance of your study to society, your community, the world, the government, etc. Choose only one of these.
28. Compare the system of justice in . . . with ours.
29. Describe the religion of . . . . How did the religion and priests influence their way of life?
30. Using models or a series of posters, create a Hall of Fame for your topic in which you hgihlight the most important and famous contributors to . . . .
31. Draw a political cartoon which shows your opinion about an issue concerning your topic.
32. Design a brochure which explains . . . .
33. Write and present a puppet show about . . . .
34. Make a speech to . . . .
35. How have the people whom you have been studying been shown in movies and literature? Write an editorial using this information and state your opinion about the power of film and literature in influencing public opinion.

36. Make a dictionary of important words about your topic.
37. Take photographs of . . . .
38. Show before and after on a chart or with photos about . . . .
39. Redesign a . . . . to show what it could look like in the future.
40. Did someone in the history of your topic show great courage? Explain.
41. Design your own system of . . . . Explain how your system is better than the one that exists.
42. What would the world be like without . . . .? Explain.
43. Write a poem about . . . .
44. If you could rewrite one stage in the history of . . . ., what would happen? Show your change in a poem, essay, short story, in pictures or a diagram.
45. Collect samples of: . . . .
46. Find out about careers in the field of: . . . .
47. Organize a debate about this issue:
    Present both sides to the class. Let the students decide which side has the best arguments.
48. Make Ripley's Believe It Or Not books in which you list surprising facts about your topic.
49. Make a series of experiments to prove/show . . . .
50. Make a diorama which shows . . . .

Adjust the language of the prototypes to fit your students. Adapt activities to their abilities, for example: if drawing or model making is too difficult, use clay. If you are working with younger students, your curriculum for each topic might be shorter than the suggested 15 to 20 activities.

Included in the following pages are suggested curriculum activities using prototypes.

ARCHITECTURE

1. Find pictures of any world capital of your choice. Describe the styles of buildings which are found in that city. Write notes about what the architecture tells about the age and traditions of the city.
2. Make a series of drawings which show the different kinds of houses people have lived in from earliest times to the present.
3. Show in detail how each of the following was built: a castle, Roman city, cathedral, pyramid, and skyscraper.
4. Design a series of buildings which would exist underground. Find out about people who live underground or who work underground.
5. Make drawings of these famous architectural sites: Guggenheim Museum, United Nations Building, the Vatican, Eiffel Tower, Arch of Triumph, Notre Dame Cathedral.
6. Make a series of drawings to show the tools used by builders of the past.
7. Make a series of drawings which show the different kinds of houses used in various climates and terrains. Explain how each one best suits its environment.
8. Give examples of the architectural contributions of the Greeks and Romans.
9. Tell about the parts of a Greek column. What are the different kinds of capitals? What do they look like?
10. Look at a very modern structure. Tell what you like and dislike about it.
11. Draw an example of each architectural form: spire, flying buttress, post and lintel, dome, colosseum, arch, vault, and pagoda.
12. Make a chart of the different jobs available in architecture.
13. Find out about each of these architects: Frank Lloyd Wright, Christopher Wren, Giovanni Bernini, Benjamin Latrobe, and I.M. Pei. Write a brief sketch of each.
14. Compare the Egyptian and Greek temples. How are they alike? How are they different?
15. Design a living/working complex which will have all the facilities required by modern people.

AVIATION

1. Describe the contributions of each of the following to the development of flying machines: Montgolfier Brothers, Leonardo da Vinci, Wright Brothers.
2. In what ways has air flight served mankind? Use words and pictures to explain.
3. Design an airport.
4. What part does radar play in flight? Draw a radar screen and a radar device.
5. Design a plane of the future. What will it be used for?
6. What problems do the SST jets present? Show your information on a chart.
7. What do planes do to the environment? Write an editorial about the problem.
8. Find out and write about the pilot's training.
9. Make a series of paper airplane designs. Fly them and keep a record of the time they remain airborne. Be sure to vary the materials you use.
10. Write a poem about flight.

11. Read a biography of one of these people and write a summary, highlighting the most important events in their lives: Wright Brothers, Amelia Earhart, Charles Lindbergh.
12. Use a series of drawings to show the development of commercial and wartime aircraft.
13. Explain how an airplane stays in the air. Use pictures if necessary.
14. Make a series of charts which describe the career opportunities in the field of aviation.
15. Make a chart which lists and explains the forces which work on an airplane in flight.
16. Design a helicopter out of paper.
17. Make a series of large picture charts which describe different kinds of flying machines: helicopter, glider, hot air balloon, amphibious plane, space shuttle.
18. Find out all you can about barnstorming. Write a story about it using true events as part of the story.
19. Select one entry from the Great International Airplane Competition and replicate it.
20. Reconstruct a model of the Kitty Hawk.

BASEBALL

1. Read a biography of a baseball player. Choose some important incidents to retell in a biography of the player for younger children.
2. Make a chart which lists the teams of the American and National Leagues. the states which they represent and the names of their home ballparks. You can also include the symbol for each team.
3. Describe the job of the umpire. What are the qualifications?
4. Explain what a "strike" is.
5. Choose any 4 members of the Baseball Hall of Fame. Tell why each was elected.
6. On a chart, give information about 5 interesting records set in baseball.
7. Find out about the origins of baseball.
8. Explain how teams get new members.
9. Describe the training of a baseball player.
10. Read the poem "Casey at the Bat". Write a summary of the poem; illustrate your summary.
11. Using diagrams, show a variety of pitches.
12. Explain why Jackie Robinson was important to the history of baseball. What tradition did he break?
13. Who were the outstanding players in the Black Baseball League? Find out about some of them.
14. Write a profile of a player playing today.
15. Pretend that you are a sportswriter. Write an article about an issue in baseball that interests you.
16. Take a poll of your classmates to see what each student's favorite team is. Show your results on a graph.

17. Think of something you'd like to change about baseball. Explain why you want the change and how it would help the game.
18. Do you think the top players deserve the high salaries they receive? Defend your answer.
19. Find out about careers in baseball besides being a player. Make a book to contain your information.
20. Explain the basic rules of the game.
21. Describe the job of each player in each position. Make a model or a diagram of the field to show where each player is located.
22. Describe the ways in which the game has changed since it began.

BOTANY

1. Find out about plants which are used for healing purposes. Which ones are used as pain killers, fever reducers, heart disease treatments, laxatives? Show this information on a chart.
2. What is cortisone? Where does it come from? What is it used for? Write a short article.
3. What is quinine? What disease does it treat? Where does it come from? Show your information on a chart.
4. Make a large chart on which you show the things we get from plants. Include food and non-food products. After making the chart, write an essay in which you support the statement that "plants support life".
5. Make a chart or poster showing the food chain from green plants to humans.
6. Describe 5 non-green plants.
7. What are some microscopic plants? How can they help or hurt mankind? Make a short book.
8. Describe how some non-green plants reproduce.
9. Describe how some green plants reproduce.
10. Why are bees necessary to flowers? Draw the cycle of which plants and bees are a part.
11. Make a diagram of a flowering plant. Label and explain the function of each part.
12. Design and carry out 2 experiments using plants. Keep careful records. Show procedures and results on a chart.
13. How do plants serve animal needs? Make a chart to show how animals rely upon plants.
14. How do plants protect soil? Use diagrams as part of your explanation.
15. Make a mural showing plant life in one of these environments: deserts, plains, jungles, forests, ocean floors.
16. Explain what a seed needs to become a healthy plant.
17. Explain the categories of plant classification. Draw an illustration for each class.
18. Explain what tropisms are. Give an example of each as it relates to plants.
19. Draw pictures of some fossilized plants. What characteristics do they seem to share?
20. Find out about and describe the work of Luther Burbank or Gregor Mendel. Use pictures and diagrams where appropriate.

CINEMA

1. Write a Who's Who of Cinema in which you describe the unique contributions of each of these people: D.W. Griffith, Mack Sennett, Charlie Chaplin, Thomas Edison, the Lumiére Brothers, George Melies, Walt Disney.
2. Explain how a motion is captured from a series of still pictures.
3. Who were the Keystone Kops? What elements were always present in their films?
4. Write a brief article about eachdefinitions lmmakers giving biographical background, a list of their most famous films, and the type of film each is most famous for: Alfred Hitchcock, Billy Wilder, Ingmar Bergman, Cecil B. De Mille, John Ford, and Orson Welles.
5. In a series of charts, give the definitiwns of these terms and illustrate those which can be illustrated: irising, fade out, wipe, close up, dissolve, MOS.
6. Describe the unique styles of these film comedians: Laurel and Hardy, Harold Lloyd, Buster Keaton, the Marx Brothers, W.C. Fields.
7. Describe the basic format of the silent film. List the most famous actors and actresses of the silent era, making a note of the type of film the person usually made: Lillian Gish, Gloria Swanson, Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks. Which ones were successful in sound movies?
8. What problems did sound bring to many actors and actresses of the silent film era?
9. Write a brief article in which you tell how films have been useful in changing people's ideas. Give specific examples of films that have succeeded in influencing people.
10. What kinds of films were most popular during the Great Depression of the 1930's? Why do you think they were the most popular? Who were the stars of these films?
11. Describe these roles in a film: Heavy, ingenue, waif, woman of the world, swash-buckler. Use notes and drawings to tell about each.
12. Discuss the effect of music in a film. In what ways can music create suspense, a feeling of gaiety, romance, etc.? Read a short story and select music to be used for background. Tape your reading.

THE CIRCUS

1. Describe the Circus Maximus of Ancient Rome.
2. How did church fairs keep circus acts from disappearing? Write an article.
3. Who were important circus owners in Europe during the 18th century? Tell about them and their circuses.
4. Describe early American circuses. Who were important "circus men" in America?
5. Make a series of biographical sketches on famous clowns throughout circus history.
6. Why are clowns called "Joeys"?
7. Make a "Believe It or Not" book in which you tell at least 15 interesting facts about the circus. Illustrate it.
8. Write a biography of P.T. Barnum for younger children.
9. Describe the P.T. Barnum circus. How did it change over the years?
10. What kind of circus did Buffalo Bill Cody have? Describe it. Illustrate.

11. Tell how a traveling circus got set up and publicized in each town.
12. Make a series of posters which describe the special circus acts which use children as performers.
13. Describe the life of a child who is part of the circus.
14. Do you think you would want to join a circus? What act would you do? Why? What training would you need?
15. Write a story for younger children about the circus.
16. Write a book that tells about the animal acts which are popular in the circus.
17. What were Mud Shows? How did they get that name? Explain in an article.
18. How did the growth of the railroads influence the popularity of the circuses? Explain.
19. In a series of posters, give information about some of the greatest, most daring performers in circus history.
20. Design a series of clown make-ups. Give each clown a name and tell what is special about the clown's character.

CLOTHING AND FASHION

1. Make a book which shows the uses of 20 little known articles of clothing.
2. Make a list of the 10 best-dressed people you know. Tell why you selected each.
3. Use pictures to show how any one of these has changed during history: shoes, collar, hat, men's pants, cape or coat.
4. Design 5 different pairs of boots for a modern woman.
5. Choose one of these periods in history and show the clothing of that time: Ancient Egypt, Ancient Greece, Roaring 20's, Elizabethan Era, Middle Ages, Victorian Era.
6. Using fabric, make a costume from a time in the past for yourself or a doll.
7. Describe and illustrate the steps required to manufacture a dress.
8. Visit a department store and compare the prices for an item of clothing. How many different prices can you find for a coat, shirt, etc.? How do you explain the price differences?
9. Make one of these items for yourself or someone else: handbag, collar, vest.
10. On a graph, show the shoe size worn by each of your classmates. What size is most popular in your class?
11. Make a sampler of 6 different embroidery stitches. Use any combination of these stitches to decorate an article of clothing.
12. Find out where these different types of cloth come from: wool, cotton, rayon, linen, silk, polyester. Collect samples of each type and mount them on a chart.
13. Make a chart which describes careers in fashion.
14. Make a list of clothes which would make up a complete wardrobe for either a boy or a girl. Go to a department store and find out what the total cost of a complete wardrobe is.

15. Make a potato print which you repeat on a piece of fabric.
16. Write an essay in which you describe what it takes to be well-dressed and well-groomed.
17. Make a series of cardboard dolls. Dress them in the costumes of people from around the world.
18. Make a puzzle using words from your study of fashion.
19. Draw a picture of magic shoes and write a story about a child's adventures with them.

THE FUTURE

1. How do you think computers will serve us in the future? Make a series of posters which will show how computers will help us in different areas of our lives.
2. What jobs do you predict will be popular 100 years from now? Compare them to the jobs of today. Why do you expect them to be popular?
3. What 5 problems do you think will be the most pressing in the future? Illustrate the problems and write an explanation of how you would deal with the problems.
4. Find out about some new methods of growing food. Explain how they will make hunger less of a problem in the future.
5. Make a list of the subjects which will be taught in school in the future.
6. Design a city which meets the needs of a future population. Use drawings or make a model. Write advertisements which will make people want to live there.
7. Write about either a national or an international problem. How will that problem change in the future? How will people in the future deal with it?
8. Design a future world government which will be fair to the people of all nations. Make a chart to show its structure. Write a brief explanation of how each part of the structure works.
9. If our future and the future of our children is to be safe, what will we have to do about our environment today?
10. Design a car for the future. What features will it have? What special requirements will it have to meet?
11. The life of today's child differs greatly from that of a colonial child. How will a child's life be different 200 years from now? Compare each on a chart.
12. What 5 problems of today would you like to see eliminated in the future? How would you do it? Explain.
13. Find out about people who long ago made predictions about their future. In what ways were they correct? How were they wrong?
14. Make a chart to show how a future child's week would be spent. Use illustrations and brief notes to explain.
15. What kinds of machines would have to be invented to make life easier in the future? Draw diagrams of them and explain their function.

16. Draw pictures of what you think a space settlement of the future would look like. What right would "earthlings" have to settle on planets in the solar system?
17. What kinds of diseases and occupational illnesses might a person of the future be likely to get? What would cause them?
18. Find out about 5 diseases which were deadly in the past, but which modern science has eliminated. Describe them and their treatment. Describe 5 diseases which are deadly today and find out what research is being done to find cures.
19. Imagine that you are part of an expedition either into space or under the ocean. Write a diary of your experiences.
20. If you could live for the next two hundred years, what changes do you think you'd see? What would remain the same? Write about each.

HUMAN BODY

1. Choose one of your senses. Pretend that you have lost it. Describe what your life would be without it. How would it be better? Worse?
2. Find out as much as you can about Helen Keller. What obstacles did she overcome? How? Why was she extraordinary? Write a short book about her.
3. Take a poll of your classmates to find out which sense they feel is most valuable to them. Make a graph to show your findings.
4. Why is blood considered the primary support of life? Describe its parts and functions.
5. Choose any one of the following and describe his/her contributions to medical science: Daniel Hale Williams, Marie Curie, Wilhelm Roentgen, Jonas Salk, Louis Pasteur, William DeBakey, Christiaan Barnard, Hippocrates, William Harvey, Rosalyn Yalow.
6. Choose one system of the body and,using drawings or cutouts , show its parts and explain how it functions.
7. Write out a plan for healthful living. Make it as complete as possible.
8. What are diseases which occur most often during childhood? Which ones have vaccines? Write a brochure about them.
9. What is venereal disease? How is it transmitted? How is it treated? Why is it so serious? Write a pamphlet with this information.
10. What is cancer? Describe 5 different forms. Describe some treatments.
11. Find out why some people are near-sighted and some are far-sighted. Make a poster to explain.
12. What makes some hair curly and some hair straight? Explain.
13. What is melanin? What does it do to the skin? Explain.
14. What is an allergy? What are some common ones? Explain.
15. Make a diagram to show what happens to food when it goes through the body.
16. Using drawings, show the development of a baby from conception to birth.
17. Find out how a broken bone is treated.
18. How do bones and muscles work together to allow movement?
19. Find out about the pituitary gland. If it doesn't work properly, what kinds of things can happen? Explain with words and pictures.

20. Make several life size outlines of the human body. For each, cut out the parts of a life system and paste them in their proper places.
21. Make up a game that will teach the player some important facts about the human body, how it works, its diseases, and ways of protecting it.
22. Make a chart listing jobs in the health field. Describe the work and qualifications for each.
23. Explain how immunization works. Make a list of diseases for which immunizations are available. Make a series of posters giving information about them or make a series of posters urging parents to have their children immunized.
24. Many Americans are overweight. What can be done to prevent being overweight?
25. Make a short book for a young child which will explain genetics.

LAW

1. Design and describe a society in which there is the greatest good for the greatest number of people under the law.
2. Can civil disobedience ever be tolerated in a society? How has it been used as a tool for change?
3. Choose a famous quotation regarding the law. Write your reactions to it.
4. Describe the system of law in these cultures of the past: Sumer, Ancient Greece, Medieval Britain.
5. What are the rights of the accused under our Constitution?
6. Describe the working of the U.S. Federal Court system.
7. Who are the present Supreme Court justices? What is the function of the Supreme Court?
8. Find out about important historical decisions of famous judges. Choose two or three. Tell what the decision was, why it was important, and what effect the decision had.
9. Read a Supreme Court decision. What was the Court's decision? Would you have dissented if you had been on the Court?
10. Make a series of posters advertising careers in law.
11. On 2 separate posters, show what is meant by Civil Law and Criminal Law.
12. What is a lease? How does it protect tenant and landlord?
13. What are fair housing laws? What is their purpose? Give examples.
14. What is a minor? How does the law protect minors?
15. When can a contract be voided?
16. What do you think of the new practice in N.Y. which treats juveniles who have committed certain violent crimes as adults? What are the advantages and disadvantages?
17. What is plea bargaining? How is it advantageous to criminals? to courts?
18. Why is crime so often linked to social conditions? How could changing a neighborhood, solving certain of its problems, help to control crime? What changes would be required? Write your ideas in an editorial.
19. What do you think of attempts to control firearms? Should they be controlled? What do you think of this slogan: "People kill, not guns"?
20. Why is it necessary to have laws?
21. Describe a state in which there are laws passed by the government, but no protection of individual rights.
22. Explain the difference between these concepts: justice and mercy.

LOST CIVILIZATIONS

1. They say that "There is nothing new under the sun". Using words and pictures, compare the buildings, art, beliefs, etc of ancient civilizations with those of today.
2. On a chart show what is known about the disappearance of several ancient civilizations.
3. Gather information on the lost civilizations listed: Indus Valley, Crete, Anatolia, Etruria, Ancient America. You will use this information to complete the activities which follow.
4. For each of the civilizations list: dates, methods of securing food, religions mythology, architecture, geographical location, methods of burial. To present the information, use dioramas, charts, pictures, mobiles, and maps.
5. Make a timeline on which you show the times during which each of the civilizations existed.
6. Make a scrapbook of the weapons and war implements used for fighting by each civilization.
7. Choose any two civilizations and make several copies of the art work and jewelry in clay, soap, papier maché, or paper.
8. Through the use of diagrams and sketches, explain the findings of studies of Chaco Canyon. You may use clay imprints to show the markings on the land.
9. Write a brief book in which you discuss the mysterious disappearance of a lost civilization. This book must be based on fact.
10. Make a model of a pyramid or other structure from ancient America.
11. Create a series of cave paintings which tell a legend from an ancient civilization.
12. Using a series of charts, show the tools and methods of the archaeologist.
13. Write a newspaper article about an archaeological find concerning one of the lost civilizations. Be sure to include how archaeologists work as well as information about the culture which is uncovered.
14. Make a crossword puzzle or word search using words from the field of archaeology, and the civilizations which you have studied.
15. Collect or write poems about your subject and things you have learned.
16. Write a fact book or dictionary about Lost Civilizations. List the information or civilizations in alphabetical order. Be sure to include key terms and their definitions. You may also divide the book into sections according to specific civilizations.

MYTHOLOGY AND LEGENDS

1. Choose any three of these cultures and compare their myths about creation and any two other scientific phenomena: Greek, African, Roman, Chinese, or Indian.
2. Write a "Who's Who of Greek Mythology" in which you list the major gods, goddesses, and people who appear in the myths. Tell about each.

3. Describe the character of Anansi the Spider of African myths. Retell in your own words a myth in which Anansi is a character. Make the retelling in the form of a fold-out book.
4. Make a book for younger children in which you retell several popular myths from the Norse cultures. Illustrate it.
5. Write a brief article about why myths exist in every culture.
6. Compare the myths of several cultures in terms of their descriptions of God.
7. What religious or moral values do myths give a culture? How did people learn to lead good lives from the myths?
8. Design a mobile which symbolizes certain aspects and characters of a favorite myth.
9. Write several myths of your own in which you explain certain things like weather, the seasons, why certain animals look and act as they do.
10. Write a bibliography of 20 books which are good examples of books about or containing myths for students of your age. Describe the illustrations. List the title, author, publisher, and a brief comment about what is especially good about each book.
11. Make a mural that tells the story of a favorite myth.
12. Make copies of the art work which has been made by various cultures to express their myths.
13. Who are some legendary Americans? Tell some of the legends that have been written about them to a group of students.
14. Write a legend or tall tale about someone who is alive today.
15. Write a tall tale about an imaginary person. Give him/her some outstanding trait and greatly exaggerate it.
16. Compile an anthology of poems which retell myths and legends.
17. Using either a diorama or a mural, tell an Indian legend.
18. Make a Mythology Zoo! Make drawings of the magical animals which appear in myths and legends. Write brief notes to explain what each animal is.

SOLAR SYSTEM

1. On a chart, give the following information about the planets of our solar system: name, size, distance from the sun, important or interesting facts.
2. Isaac Newton made some important observations which led to the modern study of space. Find out about Newton's "laws"; write them in your own words.
3. What was the Sputnik? How did it start the Space Race?
4. Tell why these men could be called Space Pioneers: Yuri Gagarin, John Glenn, and Neil Armstrong.
5. Describe the stages which are necessary to get a rocket off the ground and orbiting in space.
6. On a chart, define these "Space Dictionary Words": gravity, orbit, multi-stage rocket, satellite, lift-off, missile, cosmonaut, astronaut, asteroid, inertia, velocity.

7. What problems are created by the lack of gravity in space capsules? Draw pictures of these problems, and write short notes about how they are handled.
8. How do astronauts get food in space? Draw pictures of astronauts eating in space.
9. Make a chart listing the ways in which space travel and space studies may help to solve earth problems.
10. Make a model of our solar system.
11. Make either a large diorama or mural showing life in a Space City of the future.
12. Write an adventure story about a space journey to a planet on which life is discovered.
13. Write a short biography of Robert Goddard. Tell about his work.
14. Write a poem about what it is like to go off into space.
15. Make a graph showing the number of people who answer "Yes", "No" or "Don't Know" to the question, "Would you want to be part of a colony on the moon?". List the most interesting reasons for the answers in notes to accompany the graph.
16. What is Telestar? How does it help in the field of communication? Draw or construct a model.
17. Pretend you are an astronaut. Write a diary of your month-long trip in space.
18. Design a spacecraft. Fully describe the special features and why they are necessary.
19. Choose a planet. Make a series of drawings showing what life on that planet might be like. Write notes to explain why you think life on the planet would be that way.
20. What is a comet? Write a brief explanation and draw a picture of a comet.
21. Explain how a spacesuit provides a perfect environment for an astronaut.
22. Find out about the importance of the space shuttle Columbia. Tell and show how this vehicle can be used.

THEATRE

1. Besides performing on the Broadway stage, where else can an actor find work? Make a list.
2. How does an actor get a job? Write the steps.
3. Draw or make a model of a Greek theatre.
4. What is the symbol for the theatre? What does it represent? Draw it.
5. How does a play go from text to performance? Show the steps on a chart.
6. Find out the following about Shakespeare: When did he live? What comedies did he write? What tragedies did he write? Tell the plots of two of each type.
7. Explain why masks were used by Greek actors.
8. Tell how the Greeks felt about theatre. Explain why plays were written.
9. Explain the role of the Chorus in Greek plays.
10. What is a playbill? Explain what is found inside.
11. Tell what mime is. Who is Marcel Marceau?
12. What plays were written during the Restoration period in England? List them.

13. Describe the Japanese Kabuki and Noh theatres. How are they different from western theatre?
14. Read a biography or autobiography of the life of an actor or actress. Make a time line of his/her life.
15. Make a chart listing predominantly black plays which have appeared on Broadway.
16. Explain what makes a musical comedy a special theatrical form. On a chart, present your description and list some of the most famous musical comedies.
17. Make a series of charts showing the careers available in the theatre besides acting.
18. Read a story. Rewrite it as a play. Design sets and costumes.
19. Make a chart on which you explain the meanings of 20 stage terms which you learned from your reading.
20. Watch a play on television. Write a review of it.

WOMEN WHO CHANGED THE WORLD

1. For each of the women listed, either make a chart entry for each showing how she made an impact on her world, or make a poster for each woman and explain how she affected the lives of those around her, possibly the lives of people today: Queen Elizabeth I, Cleopatra, Florence Nightingale, Elizabeth Blackwell, Phyllis Wheatley, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Susan B. Anthony, Emmaline Pankhurst, Eleanor Roosevelt, Abigail Adams, Amelia Earhardt, Betty Friedan, Marie Curie.
2. Tell how the lives of women in each period were determined by their society: colonial, westward expansion, Victorian England. What were the roles of women during each period? What limitations were placed upon the activities of women?
3. Choose three female poets whose work you admire. Make an anthology of their poems. Write comments under some of the poems to tell what they mean to you and why they were selected for the anthology.
4. Find out about women authors starting with the 18th century (1700's). Who were they? What books did they write? What were the books about? What problems did they face as female authors? Be sure to include Charlotte and Emily Bronte, George Eliot, George Sand and Jane Austin.
5. Design a stamp to honor the accomplishments of a famous woman.
6. Write and then tape an interview between yourself and a famous woman of the past. Formulate your questions first. Then do your research to discover the answers. Then write and tape the interview.
7. Read a biography of at least one famous woman who lived before 1900 and another one about a woman who lived after 1900. Compare the lives of the two women.
8. Write a biography for younger readers which tells the life story of a woman about whom you think it's important to know.
9. Make a time line to show when each of the women listed in the first activity lived.

10. Interview women of your mother's generation and of your grandmother's generation. Ask what girls were taught about being women when they were young girls. Ask what opportunities were open to women during those years. Write down your questions and answers.
11. Considering all the periods of history up to the present day, what do you think is/was the best period for women?
12. Make a game which follows the events in the life of a woman who has had an eventful life. When a player lands on a time which was difficult or had setbacks, make the player lose a turn or go back to start, etc. When good things happen, let them go ahead several spaces or have some other privilege.

STEP III. READINESS ACTIVITIES BEFORE INDEPENDENT STUDY ORIENTATION

To construct a foundation for Independent Study, while designing the curricula, the teacher will teach basic research techniques using the quick approaches outlined below.

HOW TO USE A TABLE OF CONTENTS AND AN INDEX:

1. Distribute texts to students.
2. Ask students to turn to the table of contents.
   a. Ask students to locate the chapters in which specific information can be found. Students give chapter title or number.
   b. In some cases ask for information not contained in the book.
3. Ask students to turn to the index at the back of the book.
   a. Ask students to state how information is organized in the index. Compare this arrangement to the table of contents.
   b. Ask students to provide page numbers for specific types of information.
   c. Be sure to include information which is not supplied.
4. As students gain facility in locating information through the use of the table of contents and index, make it a race to find the location of specific kinds of information.

HOW TO USE AN ENCYCLOPEDIA OR BOOK OF KNOWLEDGE SERIES:

1. Point out arrangement of the volumes.
2. Point out index.
3. Give students practice in locating information with and without the index volume.

HOW TO USE A CARD CATALOG:

Make a transparency of a model of a card from the card catalog.

a. Ask students to identify the author of the book.
b. Ask students to identify the subject(s) covered in the book.
c. Ask students to identify the part of the library in which the book would be found (refer to call numbers).
d. Inform students that each book has 3 cards and that books can be found simply by knowing the subject, title, or author.

HOW TO SUMMARIZE:

This is a way to prove to students that they do not have to copy directly out of the book they are using. I inform students that plagiarism is thievery.

1. Distribute an article or short reading selection.

   a. Establish, state, write the main idea.
   b. List supporting facts.
   c. Rewrite the phrases as sentences to form a paragraph which is the restatement of the major points of the article USING THE WORDS OF THE STUDENTS, NOT THE AUTHOR.

2. Show a filmstrip repeating a-c above.

STEP IV. ASSEMBLING RESOURCES

Look around the school, at home and the library with new eyes. Review school filmstrip list. There is a wealth of information once you start seriously looking around you.

ESPECIALLY EFFECTIVE RESOURCES FOR INDEPENDENT STUDY PROJECTS

MAGAZINES:

Natural History	National Wildlife	Smithsonian
Cricket	Learning	Vogue
Time	New York	New York Times Sunday Magazine
Newsweek	Ranger Rick	Discover

PICTURE FILE:

This is an ongoing project. Good sources in addition to magazines are provided in junk mail book advertisements which we all receive. Don't overlook single copies of textbooks as a source for pictures and maps.

PUBLICATIONS FOR STUDENTS:

Sprint	Junior and Senior Scholastic
My Weekly Reader	Current Science

FILMS/FILMSTRIPS:

Donnell Library	U.N. Missions	Oil Companies

LANGUAGE ARTS/READING MATERIALS:

Poetry Collections	SRA kits (biographical and non-fiction selections)
Basal Readers	Plays
	Reading Comprehension Material

MUSEUMS:

Depending on the age/maturity of students and/or availability of parents as chaperones, a visit to a large museum can best be handled by making it a series of mini trips with students visiting only the relevant areas. This makes the trip a true research trip.

New York Historical Society - 873-3400 - Colonial days to westward expansion

Museum of Natural History - 873-4225 - all sciences; cultures of the Pacific, Asia, Africa, American Indians

Metropolitan Museum of Art - 535-7710 - Eastern Cultures, Colonial America to Present, Ancient Egypt, Sumer, Asia, Greece, Rome

Cooper-Hewitt Museum - 860-6868 - art, design, architecture

The Cloisters - 923-3700 - Middle Ages - art, architecture, sculpture

STEP V. MANAGEMENT

Decide if students will work as individuals, pairs, groups, or as a class. If individuals, pairs, or small groups (no more than 5 students) work on the Independent Study, they can work in an area at the back of the classroom, in a small adjoining room, or outside the classroom door. The teacher should have easy access to the students. All students must have a place to keep materials between work sessions. Listed on the next pages are some considerations a teacher must be aware of if the entire class is going to work on Independent Study at the same time.

PHYSICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Establish an area for using paints, clay and "wet stuff".
- Establish an area where supplies are readily available. Lunch trays with scissors, glue, crayons, etc. can be placed around the room for easy access.
- Provide space for each child to store his work envelope or folder, along with resources.
- If you have movable furniture consider a seating plan which would enable students to work in groups or at specific kinds of tasks: a reading area, craft area, listening area (tape recorder/records),etc.
- For students who are easily distracted or potentially distracting, establish a separate work area which you can easily monitor.

DISCIPLINE

- During student orientation, emphasize the responsibility students have to themselves and to each other to not interfere with the work of others.
- Allow for interaction among students. They often make valuable contributions to each other and can be supportive.
- Be sure you can monitor students while they work.
- When a student creates a discipline problem, ask, "How will you evaluate yourself today when you have to face yourself?" This is not the time for loud verbal chastisement. A student may have to be isolated or denied the opportunity to work for a day, in extreme cases.
- Read Daily Logs every day to be able to assist with problems. Problems should be taken care of immediately. When a student has a genuine interest, poor behavior is usually the result of a problem which impedes progress.

TIME CONSIDERATION

- Plan for a minimum of 2 hours per week.
- Have at least two sessions per week.
- Consider any time/subject mandates imposed by the school administration and work within them.
- Make schedules as definite as possible. Things happen which require schedule changes, but many changes will lessen the importance of Independent Study in the minds of the students.

- Have some idea of a closing date. Some students will go on forever if you let them.
- Write a schedule on the chalkboard if the entire class shares the schedule, or distribute a schedule form for each student if work times differ.
- As work progresses, an extended, uninterrupted work time must be provided.
- The minimum length of time a child should spend on Independent Study is a class period. Don't let students work on Independent Study projects as a filler between classroom activities.

STEP VI. SUGGESTIONS FOR CULMINATING ACTIVITIES

Listed below are some suggested culminating activities a teacher can do with students involved with Independent Study.

- Museum or fair - parents, administrators, and other classes are invited to some area to see a number of completed Independent Study projects. Students from the class will be present as hosts and guides.
- Student Demonstrations - given for selected guests, parents, classmates, etc. The demonstration might be a "guest appearance" in another classroom.
- Videotaped presentation - use a magazine format.
- Bind written materials and preserve as part of a class reference library.

STEP VII. MODES OF TEACHER EVALUATION

The forms which follow are an important aspect of the Independent Study program. Through the forms, students can communicate their needs and concerns to the teacher without interrupting the teacher. The questions on the forms help the students to plan and evaluate their progress continuously. Serious use of the forms will help students to develop maturity as independent learners.

If school paper is a problem, the forms are simple enough for students to write in their notebooks with some minor adaptations.

The first two forms give students control through planning and formulating their commitment to the study.

These forms are to be introduced during student orientation which is described in STEP VIII.

NAME _____ DATE _____

INDEPENDENT STUDY PROJECT PLANS

Check the methods you will use to complete your study:

a. I'll get information by

____Reading ____ Listening ____ Observing

____Interviewing ____ Experimenting

b. I'll be working

____alone ____ with one classmate ____ in a group

c. I'll share my knowledge by

____making something ____ making a display

____speaking/teaching ____ writing

INDEPENDENT STUDY PROJECT AGREEMENT

I, _____, shall be studying _____.

I shall get information from _____

_____.

I shall share my new knowledge with others by _____

_____.

I plan to be ready to share by _____/_____/_____.
Date

Teacher Suggestions: _____

_____

_____ _____ _____

Pupil's Signature Teacher's Signature

The following form gives Independent Study importance and makes it an integrated part of the daily classroom plan.
If the schedule is to be changed, a new form should be given once each week.

INDEPENDENT STUDY PROJECT SCHEDULE		
DAY	PERIOD/TIME	LOCATION
MON. TUES. WED. THURS. FRI.		

The DAILY LOG form is the means by which students plan on a daily basis, evaluate themselves, communicate with teachers and project future activity.

Each DAILY LOG should be read by the teacher every day before meeting with students for Independent Study; a new form should be given to the student each day.

I have sometimes had students make a Daily Log book comprised of enough log forms for each day of the Independent Study. These books were easily collected and read each day. In this way, students also had a running account of their progress. It was often possible to see changes in attitudes and academic growth when reading the logs as a unit.

DAILY LOG

NAME _____ DATE ___/___/___

Today I'll try to find information about _____.
I'll use these resources: _____.
Today, I'll try to complete this task: _____.
My work today was: ___ poor ___ fair ___ good ___ very good.
My work would have been better if: _____

_____

The best thing about my work today was: _____

_____

The hardest thing I had to do today was: _____

_____

I really need help with: _____
My main task for tomorrow is: _____
I shall need these materials tomorrow: _____

_____

I'll get them by: _____

STEP VIII. STUDENT ORIENTATION

Students' orientation should take place just before students start their projects.

Listed below are a few things that should have been done prior to this step.

- *Basic reference skills have been taught.*
- *Curriculum has been designed and written.*
- *Resources have been assembled.*
- *Number of students involved has been determined.*
- *A list of culminating activities has been prepared.*
- *All forms have been created.*

Students about to begin their Independent Study work should have a complete understanding of the teacher's expectations and the ground rules concerning their functioning while doing Independent Study. At least one period should be spent for orientation purposes. This orientation will include:

- a statement of procedures for working
- an introduction to the log and other forms
- a review of reference skills
- an introduction to the location of materials and resources
- a simulation activity
- an explanation of the activities so that students fully understand the tasks

This orientation period is when the teacher gives background information and anticipates problems. It's important at this time to draw a distinction between fruitful interactions and socializing.

A relaxed exchange of ideas between students is healthy. Students should be warned that Independent Study time is not for socializing. You must be ready to separate and/or redirect students who waste time.

The orientation is crucial and its completeness will determine how smoothly the program functions. Again, orientation can be for the full class, groups, or individuals.

STEP IX. STUDENT EVALUATION

It is important that students know how their work will be evaluated. Listed below are suggested elements that should be included in the students' evaluation by the teacher.

- Work should be of quality that matches student's ability.
- Work should show some originality.
- Presentations should be neat and accurate.
- Students must complete tasks they selected.
- Behavior, attitude and daily productivity will be evaluated.
- Daily Log is a self-evaluation and should be honest and accurate.

Below is a suggested student evaluation form which provides important feedback for the teacher. Each child receives a sheet when the Independent Study has been completed.

MY INDEPENDENT STUDY PROJECT EVALUATION

NAME _____ TOPIC _____

I. (Check the responses which are true for you.)

Finding information was usually:

_____ easy _____ difficult _____ half and half

When I got the information it was usually:

____ easy to understand ____ difficult to understand ____ half and half

The noise in the room usually:

____ made it hard for me to concentrate

____ didn't bother me

Working with others was:

____ pleasant ____ difficult at times ____ I worked alone

Some things that were problems for me were:

____ getting information ____ getting materials to make my project items

____ sharing materials or waiting for others to finish

I think my completed Independent Study Project was:

___ of good quality ___ of superior quality ___ of poor quality

I think I did:

___ my best ___ less than my best

I would:

____ like to do another Independent Study Project

____ never want to repeat the experience

II. (Complete each sentence to tell how you feel.)

The best part about doing an Independent Study Project was:

_____

I think I would have worked harder/better if:

_____

The worst part about doing an Independent Study Project was:

_____

The part of my Independent Study Project that makes me most proud is:

_____

If I could do my project over again, something I'd change is:

_____

If I did another Independent Study, I'd want the topic to be:

STEP X. SUGGESTED PARENT INVOLVEMENT

It may be wise to inform parents about the Independent Study program in your classroom. A suggested letter is included below so that parents can feel that they are a resource and understand that their child's basic skills are being reinforced by Independent Study experiences.

Dear Parent,

Your child _____ of class _____ is about to begin a very valuable and important school experience. _____ will begin to work on an Independent Study of _____.

The Independent Study will run for about _____ weeks. During that time, part of each day will be spent learning about the chosen topic. While working on the Independent Study, your child will apply the reading, math, social studies and reference skills which have been taught in class.

Independent Study is important because it makes your child responsible for his/her own learning. Through this experience, your child will develop the ability to plan and use time properly, communicate what has been learned to others, think critically and evaluate his/her own performance. Through this experience, your child may even become a better student.

Each child has a curriculum which has been designed to provide the best possible opportunities for learning. Ask your child to show you this curriculum. I have assembled a variety of materials in school to supply needed information. It may be necessary for your child to visit a library or a museum for additional information. At home, your child should be on the lookout for newspaper and magazine articles as well as television programs which will help provide important information.

Independent Study is an exciting time for students. I hope that you will encourage your child to talk about what is being learned and accomplished during the study.

If you would like further information, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

WHAT DO I DO IF...?

A STUDENT HAS LIMITED READING ABILITY?

- Pair the limited reader with a better reader.
- Provide tapes, filmstrips with cassettes, films and pictures as resources.
- Have student visit exhibits in museums.
- Assign relevant television watching.
- Use selections from a simply written reading comprehension series.
- Scan basal readers written for lower reading levels which may be pertinent to the chosen topic. Use the stories as resource materials.
- Find out what special abilities the student possesses (art, modeling, storytelling, etc.) and provide ample opportunities to make contributions through these forms.

A STUDENT DOESN'T WANT TO PARTICIPATE?

- Remember that Independent Study is awesome for a student who never had such freedom before.
- Get the student to explain what he doesn't like about it.
- Let the student know that you will allow a few extra days to decide on a topic.
- Remind the student that he/she may become an expert on the subject.
- State that doing Independent Study isn't an option - the choice of a topic is the option.

A STUDENT HAS NO DRAWING ABILITY AND HAS TO DO SOME ILLUSTRATIONS?

- "Commission" a more artistically able student to do the drawing. The "artist" will learn about the topic and make an important contribution.

A STUDENT HAS LIMITED WRITING ABILITY?

- Ask another student to write as dictated.
- Use a tape recorder.
- Emphasize activities which use other modes of sharing - charts, illustrations, models, etc.

AN ADMINISTRATOR SAYS THAT IT'S NOT THE CURRICULUM?

- Show the links between the curriculum items and reading, math, writing, and research skills.

I WANT TO DO INDEPENDENT STUDY WITH YOUNGER CHILDREN WHO HAVE LIMITED SKILLS?

- Use books written for younger students on non-fiction subjects. There are many companies which publish whole series.
- Adapt the prototypes. A diagram could be a flat model made with clay or Play-Doh.
- Work with groups and share some information verbally.
- Assign fewer activities or make curricula shorter.